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SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR;
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [KTIP](#) [KWMN](#) [PGOV](#) [SMIG](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: 2009 TIP REPORT INTERIM ASSESSMENT: ST. VINCENT
AND THE GRENADINES

REF: A. STATE 110433
[B](#). BRIDGETOWN 529

[1](#). (SBU) Since being placed on the Tier 2 Watchlist, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (GOSVG) has worked cooperatively with the Embassy to ensure that the country addresses the perceived weaknesses that landed it on that list. Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves spoke to the Charge and Assistant Secretary Shannon and wrote to the Secretary immediately following the release of the TIP Report, questioning the factual basis and conclusions of the report, but also affirming a willingness to work with the USG to strengthen his government's ability to prevent TIP. In this regard, the GOSVG has requested assistance from G/TIP on areas of concern to that office. In August, a G/TIP consultant and poloff met with GOSVG officials and local NGO representatives in St. Vincent, and found all interlocutors to be receptive on the possibility of receiving USG assistance for, inter alia, police training, legislative drafting and public awareness campaigns (Ref B).

Interim Assessment

[2](#). (SBU) Responses below are keyed to questions in Ref A:

A: Please summarize the progress, or lack thereof, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made in developing and implementing a comprehensive anti-trafficking law:

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) Attorney General's Chamber's legislative consultant, Peter Purseglove, told the G/TIP consultant and poloff in an August meeting that the GOSVG is open to developing a comprehensive anti-trafficking law to build upon the trafficking-related laws already in place. The GOSVG hopes to ratify the Palermo Protocol by the end of 2009, he added. In separate meetings with the G/TIP consultant and poloff, PM Gonsalves and Director of Public Prosecutions R. Colin Williams both requested assistance from the USG to draft appropriate and adequate legislation.

B: Please summarize the progress, or lack thereof, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made in investigating allegations of the commercial sexual exploitation of children:

The SVG Ministry of Mobilization and Social Development, as well as police officials and the Director of Public Prosecutions, claimed that allegations made to date had proven to be baseless, as no cases had been brought to the police or other government bodies. Vincentian-based NGOs concurred with this assessment. Nevertheless, government and NGO entities alike thought that public awareness campaigns

and police training would be useful -- in addition to instituting a comprehensive anti-trafficking law -- to thwart potential future cases.

C: Please summarize the progress, or lack thereof, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made in utilizing existing legal statutes to prosecute cases of women or children forced into commercial sexual exploitation:

Police officials were aware of only one such case during the August visit with the G/TIP consultant. That case involved the possible forced labor of minor(s) in cannabis production. Police officials speculated that the minor(s) in question may have purported to be exploited to avoid being charged with drug-related offenses, a proposition we believe is plausible. More recently, the Director of Public Prosecutions and police officials contacted the Embassy's Political/Economic Section and LEGATT, respectively and separately, to proactively inform the Embassy of an incident in which a number of women (mainly from the Dominican Republic) had attempted to exit SVG bound for the British Virgin Islands without SVG entry stamps in their passports. That incident, along with a request for assistance in conducting a thorough investigation, was relayed to G/TIP immediately, noting that such cases exemplify the need to move forward with training, technical and other assistance to help SVG deal with potential TIP-related issues. LEGATT is unable to assist in the case due to the absence of a U.S. connection to either the suspect or the alleged victims; G/TIP has provided a toll-free number for victims, assistance to relay to the GOSVG. The GOSVG is unlikely to be able to successfully investigate this case without

BRIDGETOWN 00000686 002 OF 002

substantial law enforcement assistance from the U.S. or another competent partner.

D: Please summarize the progress, or lack thereof, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made in providing protective services to children rescued from commercial sexual exploitation:

SVG has two centers for at-risk children that cater to boys and girls separately. One such center, the Liberty Lodge Training Center for At-risk Boys, is currently receiving USAID assistance, and is in the process of applying for an Embassy grant to refurbish its deteriorating facilities. Both the Liberty Lodge and the Guadeloupe Center for At-risk Girls fall under the purview of the SVG Ministry of Mobilization and Social Development and receive GOSVG funding. There are also local Catholic and Anglican Church groups that provide ad hoc assistance.

Comment

13. (SBU) The GOSVG has responded vigorously to the Tier II Watchlisting, and has made the most senior levels of the government available to us. They have indicated a willingness to draft adequate counter-TIP legislation and have made serious efforts both to investigate TIP allegations and improve assistance to TIP victims. However, the Government lacks the resources to make significant progress alone. The Embassy is currently awaiting a response from G/TIP to the findings of the G/TIP contractor's report, as well as to the GOSVG's requests for legislative drafting assistance and investigative assistance on potential G/TIP cases that may be uncovered in the future.

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